



Mobile Phone & Smart Technology Policy

2026/27

POLICY REQUIRED UNDER STATUTORY GUIDANCE | Applies from September 2026 | All staff must read and acknowledge

Policy owner	Headteacher
Named senior leader	Nick Hobbis
Operational lead	Nick Hobbis
Named governor	TBC
Approval body	Governing Body
Approved	1 st September 2026
Effective from	1 st September 2026
Next review	No later than September 2027
Review cycle	At least annually and sooner following significant incident, material operational change, or change to statutory guidance
Version	1.0
Publication	Academy website and staff policy system
Staff requirement	All staff must understand and consistently enforce the academy's mobile phone and smart technology expectations.

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1. Purpose and statutory status

Smith's Wood Primary Academy is committed to providing a calm, safe and focused learning environment in which pupils are protected from avoidable distraction, online harm and inappropriate use of personal technology. This policy establishes the academy's arrangements for mobile phones and other communication-enabled smart technology.

The Department for Education's Mobile phones in schools guidance became statutory on 29th June 2026 and schools are expected to follow it from 1st September 2026. The guidance establishes a clear expectation that schools operate as mobile phone-free environments by default and prohibit pupil use of mobile phones and smart technology with similar functionality throughout the school day, except where a lawful or individually justified adjustment applies.

This policy replaces the academy's 2024 Mobile and Smart Technology Policy and must be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, SEND arrangements, Educational Visits Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Data Protection Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils and to all academy-controlled activity during the school day, including lessons, movement around school, breaktimes, lunchtimes, clubs operating immediately before or after the school day where the academy determines the restriction applies, and school-organised visits and events as set out in this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, 'mobile phone' includes smartphones and non-smart mobile phones. 'Smart technology' includes any personally owned device with substantially similar communication, notification, internet, audio-recording, image/video-recording or messaging functionality. This may include smart watches, connected watches, communication-enabled wearable devices and other emerging technology.

Ordinary watches or devices that do not provide communication, recording, internet or notification functionality are not prohibited merely because they are digital.

3. Legal and guidance framework

- Department for Education - Mobile phones in schools: statutory guidance (updated 29th June 2026; to be followed from 1 September 2026).
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including school behaviour and disciplinary powers.
- Education Act 1996, including statutory search powers.
- Equality Act 2010 - reasonable adjustments and non-discrimination.
- Children and Families Act 2014, section 100 - support for pupils with medical conditions.
- Department for Education - Behaviour in schools.
- Department for Education - Searching, screening and confiscation in schools.
- Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.
- UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and current DfE data-protection guidance, as amended to reflect the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- DfE filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges.

4. Academy policy position

Smith's Wood Primary Academy is a mobile phone-free environment for pupils throughout the school day.

Pupils are not permitted to access or use a mobile phone, communication-enabled smart watch or other prohibited smart technology during the school day. This applies from the point at which a pupil enters the

academy site until the pupil has been formally dismissed and left academy supervision, unless an authorised exception applies.

The academy recognises that some pupils, particularly older primary pupils travelling independently, may carry a mobile phone for use on the journey to and from school. Where a pupil brings a phone to school, it must be switched fully off and handed to the designated member of staff / class teacher on arrival for secure storage in accordance with the academy's local procedure. It will be returned at the end of the school day.

Smart watches or wearable devices capable of sending or receiving messages, calls or notifications, accessing the internet, or recording audio, images or video must not be worn or used by pupils in school unless expressly authorised as a reasonable adjustment, medical arrangement or other exceptional provision.

The academy does not require pupils to bring personal devices to school and parents/carers are strongly encouraged to consider whether bringing a device is necessary.

5. Core principles

- The academy is mobile phone-free for pupils throughout the school day by default.
- Pupils who bring a phone for travel or safety reasons will surrender it for secure storage and will not have access during the school day unless an authorised exception applies.
- Communication-enabled smart watches and equivalent technology are treated in the same way as mobile phones.
- Expectations will be simple, visible, consistently enforced and aligned with the Behaviour Policy.
- Safeguarding concerns take precedence over disciplinary considerations.
- Reasonable adjustments and medical requirements will be individually assessed and documented.
- Staff will model the standard expected of pupils and avoid personal phone use in front of pupils.
- Parents/carers will use the academy office to communicate with pupils during the school day.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Governing Body

- Ensures the academy has an effective policy consistent with statutory guidance.
- Approves the policy and receives assurance on implementation, safeguarding and equality implications.
- Ensures appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements are in place and regularly reviewed.

6.2 Headteacher

- Holds overall accountability for implementation.
- Determines local storage, confiscation, search and exception arrangements.
- Authorises staff to conduct searches where legally appropriate.
- Ensures policy details are published and communicated to pupils, parents and staff.
- Ensures sanctions are proportionate and reasonable adjustments are made where required.

6.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Advises where device misuse creates or reveals a safeguarding concern.
- Ensures incidents involving harmful content, exploitation, bullying, sexual harassment or imagery are managed under safeguarding procedures.
- Supports preservation and appropriate handling of digital evidence.

6.4 All staff

- Consistently enforce the policy.
- Do not use personal phones for personal reasons in front of pupils.
- Follow academy procedures for storage, confiscation and reporting.

- Escalate safeguarding concerns immediately.
- Respect authorised medical and reasonable-adjustment arrangements.

6.5 Pupils

- Follow the mobile phone-free expectation.
- Surrender devices where required and do not retain undisclosed devices.
- Use any authorised device only for the agreed purpose, time and location.
- Report online or device-related concerns to a trusted adult.

7. Pupil arrangements: bringing a phone to school

Where a parent/carers chooses for a pupil to bring a mobile phone to school for travel or safety reasons, the following arrangements apply:

- the device must be switched fully off before or immediately upon entering the academy;
- the device must be handed to the designated member of staff / class teacher for secure storage;
- pupils must not retain a second or undisclosed device;
- devices must not be accessed during the school day unless specifically authorised;
- devices will normally be returned at dismissal;
- pupils must not use the device while still under academy supervision unless a member of staff has expressly authorised this.

The academy will take reasonable care of devices surrendered and stored under this procedure. Parents/carers remain responsible for deciding whether a valuable personal device is brought onto academy premises. Nothing in this policy seeks to exclude liability where the academy would be legally responsible for loss or damage.

8. Smart watches and wearable technology

Communication-enabled smart watches are treated as mobile phones for the purposes of this policy. A device is prohibited where it can send or receive calls, messages or notifications; connect independently or through a paired phone; access online services; or capture audio, photographs or video.

Where a wearable is required for a diagnosed medical condition, disability or other approved individual need, the academy will agree a specific arrangement identifying the permitted purpose, times and locations of use and any safeguards required.

A basic watch, fitness tracker or wearable without prohibited communication or recording functionality may be permitted, subject to the academy's normal expectations regarding jewellery, safety and distraction.

Under this policy framework, and with the authorisation of the Headteacher, staff may wear smartwatches or similar wearable technology while working on school premises or undertaking school-related activities. Such devices must be used responsibly and must not compromise professional boundaries, safeguarding, confidentiality or data protection.

Staff must not use a smartwatch or other personal wearable device to photograph, video, audio-record or otherwise capture images, sound or footage of pupils, staff, parents/carers or school activities in any school-related setting. Where photography, video or audio recording is required for a legitimate educational or operational purpose, only school-authorized equipment and systems may be used.

Smartwatches must not be used for personal messaging, calls, notifications or other non-work-related activity while staff are directly supervising or working with pupils, except where there is an emergency or a specific arrangement authorised by the Headteacher. Staff are expected to model the standards of responsible technology use required of pupils.

9. Reasonable adjustments, medical use and exceptional circumstances

The academy will apply this policy consistently while meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014. A blanket prohibition will not override a pupil's lawful entitlement to a reasonable adjustment or necessary support for a medical condition.

Examples may include a pupil who needs a phone or connected device to manage a medical condition, such as continuous glucose monitoring, or a pupil whose disability or individual circumstances make restricted access necessary.

Any exception will be individually assessed and authorised by the Headteacher or delegated senior leader. The arrangement should define the specific purpose, device, permitted times and locations, supervision or storage arrangements, and review date. An authorised exception does not create unrestricted permission for personal use.

10. Communication during the school day

Parents/carers who need to contact their child during the school day must contact the academy office. Staff will relay urgent messages or facilitate appropriate contact.

Pupils who need to contact home during the school day must speak to a member of staff and use academy communication arrangements. Personal phones must not be used as an alternative.

Where a pupil needs to show staff evidence of an online-safety or safeguarding concern held on their device, staff will ensure that the pupil can access the device in a safe, supervised and appropriate way without undermining preservation of evidence or safeguarding procedures.

11. Staff use of mobile phones and personal devices

Staff are expected to model the academy's standards. Personal mobile phones must not be used for personal reasons in front of pupils during the school day.

Limited professional use may be authorised where necessary for academy business, for example multi-factor authentication, operational communication, educational applications, emergency response or another approved function. Such use must remain proportionate and consistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, safeguarding expectations and data-protection requirements.

Staff must not routinely use personal devices to photograph, video or record pupils. Where exceptional use is expressly authorised, the academy's safeguarding and data-protection requirements must be followed, including secure transfer and prompt deletion from the personal device and any personal cloud backup.

12. Photography, video, audio and personal data

Pupils must not use personal devices to photograph, film or audio-record pupils, staff, visitors or academy activities.

Images, audio and video from which a person can be identified are personal data and must be handled in accordance with data-protection law and academy policy. Unauthorised recording may also create safeguarding, bullying, harassment or reputational risks.

Any suspected covert recording, sharing of images, livestreaming, harmful content or misuse of personal data will be addressed through safeguarding, behaviour and data-protection procedures as appropriate.

13. Breaches, sanctions and confiscation

Breaches of this policy will be managed in accordance with the academy's Behaviour Policy. Responses will be proportionate to the pupil's age, SEND, individual circumstances, seriousness of the incident, previous conduct and any safeguarding considerations.

A mobile phone or similar device may be confiscated as a disciplinary sanction where the policy is breached. Examples include a device being used, visible, heard ringing, receiving notifications, being retained contrary to the agreed storage arrangement, or being used to record or communicate without permission.

The length of confiscation and arrangements for return will be determined proportionately. The academy may require collection by a parent/carer where appropriate. Repeated or serious misuse may result in enhanced sanctions and an individual management plan.

Where misuse indicates that a pupil may be suffering or at risk of harm, staff must follow the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy without delay.

14. Searching and examination of devices

Mobile phones and similar devices are identified within academy rules as items that may be searched for where the legal threshold for a search is met.

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher may exercise statutory search powers, and any search must be undertaken in accordance with current Department for Education Searching, screening and confiscation guidance and the academy's Behaviour Policy including the relevant policy for Confiscation and Searching.

The existence of a mobile phone policy does not give staff an unrestricted power to inspect the contents of a pupil's device. Any examination of data or files must have a lawful basis and follow the applicable statutory guidance. Where staff encounter suspected indecent images, criminal material or evidence relevant to safeguarding, they must preserve evidence, avoid unnecessary viewing or sharing, and seek immediate advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where required, police or children's social care.

15. Online safety, harmful content and safeguarding

Mobile technology can facilitate bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, harmful content, exploitation, inappropriate contact and the sharing of images or personal information. Any concern involving a pupil's use of a device will be considered first through a safeguarding lens.

Incidents that occur outside school may still be addressed where they affect pupils' welfare, behaviour, relationships, safety or the orderly operation of the academy. Staff will follow KCSIE 2026, the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and the Behaviour Policy when deciding the appropriate response.

The academy will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements for academy networks and devices. Personal mobile data connections are not a substitute for academy-controlled access and are one reason pupil personal devices are prohibited during the school day.

16. Educational visits, residentials, clubs and events

For activities occurring during the normal school day, the same prohibition applies off site unless the visit leader has obtained prior authorisation for a specific educational, medical or safety purpose.

For residential visits or activities extending substantially beyond the normal school day, the Educational Visit Coordinator and visit leader will confirm that phones are prohibited. The explanation will be communicated to parents/carers in advance and reflected in visit planning and risk management.

Pupils must never photograph, film, record or communicate in a way that breaches another person's privacy, dignity, safeguarding or the academy's expectations.

17. Parents/carers and partnership

Parents/carers are expected to support the academy's mobile phone-free environment by:

- ensuring pupils understand the policy before bringing a device to school;
- avoiding contacting pupils directly on personal devices during the school day;

- using the academy office for urgent messages;
- ensuring any device brought to school is appropriate and identifiable;
- discussing safe, respectful and age-appropriate technology use at home;
- informing the academy where a medical, disability-related or exceptional need may require an individual adjustment.

The academy will communicate this policy clearly and publish details of its mobile phone arrangements.

18. Teaching pupils about mobile technology

The academy will teach pupils, in an age-appropriate way, about the risks and benefits associated with mobile technology and online communication. This will include distraction and loss of focus, cyberbullying, privacy, consent, sharing images, digital footprints, harmful content, respectful communication and how to seek help.

Pupils will also be taught why a mobile phone-free school environment supports concentration, relationships, safeguarding and positive behaviour.

19. Loss, damage and security

Personal devices remain the property and responsibility of the pupil/parent. The academy will use reasonable arrangements for devices voluntarily surrendered or confiscated and will take reasonable care while they are in academy custody.

The academy cannot guarantee against every instance of loss, theft or accidental damage. Any allegation that a device was lost or damaged while in academy custody will be investigated and handled in accordance with the facts and the academy's legal responsibilities. This replaces the previous blanket statement that the academy accepts no responsibility in any circumstances.

20. Monitoring, assurance and review

The Headteacher will ensure that implementation is consistent and that pupils, staff and parents understand the academy's expectations. Leaders will monitor breaches, repeat incidents, safeguarding concerns, confiscations, reasonable adjustments and operational issues to identify trends and required action.

The Governing Body will receive appropriate assurance that the academy is meeting the statutory guidance and its wider safeguarding, equality and behaviour duties.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a significant incident, material change in academy arrangements, or change to legislation or statutory guidance.

21. Related academy documents

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- SEND Policy / SEN Information Report
- Educational Visits Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Anti-Bullying arrangements
- Searching / confiscation procedures where separately documented

22. Local implementation schedule

Control	Smith's Wood local arrangement
Pupil phones on arrival	Switched fully off and handed to class teacher / designated member of staff for secure storage.
Return of phones	At end-of-day dismissal unless confiscated under the Behaviour Policy.
Smart watches	Communication-/recording-enabled smart watches prohibited unless individually authorised.
Parent contact during school day	Via academy office.
Authorised medical / reasonable adjustments	Recorded individually with purpose, time/location, safeguards and review date.
Confiscated device storage	Main Office
Parent collection threshold	Each occasion following confiscation
Staff authorised to search	Headteacher and staff specifically authorised by the Headteacher in accordance with statutory guidance.
Recording of significant incidents	Behaviour system and/or MyConcern where safeguarding relevance exists.
Policy publication location	Academy website and staff policy system.

23. Approval and version control

Version	Date	Change / reason	Approved by
1.0	01/09/26	Full rewrite of 2024 policy into academy controlled-policy standard; aligned to statutory DfE mobile phone guidance effective from September 2026.	Governing Body

Approval signatures (where the academy uses wet signatures):

Role	Name / signature	Date
Policy Writer	Nick Hobbis	01/09/26
Chair of Governors		
Headteacher		

24. Primary external guidance

- Department for Education - Mobile phones in schools (statutory guidance, updated 29th June 2026)
- Department for Education - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Department for Education - Behaviour in schools
- Department for Education - Searching, screening and confiscation in schools
- Department for Education - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Department for Education - Data protection in schools
- Department for Education - Filtering and monitoring core standard